



CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is an unprecedented cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and the public to ensure a healthy ecosystem, reliable water supplies, good water quality, and stable levees in California's Bay-Delta.

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Water Use Efficiency Common Program

Stakeholder Analysis

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC), which represents Bay-Delta stakeholders, has assigned a work group to help identify policy issues relating to water use efficiency and to gather information about possible water use efficiency programs.

Introduction

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program alternatives share common programs for water use efficiency, ecosystem restoration, water quality protection, and levee improvement. (The alternatives differ according to the conveyance and storage elements.) This fact sheet summarizes the water use efficiency common program.

Importance of Water Use Efficiency

Many urban and agricultural water users in California already have significant water use efficiency programs in place. But the public has said, via hundreds of letters to CALFED and more than 20 CALFED public meetings, that our state should attempt to do more to reduce demand for Delta water. It seems clear that when voters and other decisionmakers are asked to approve funds for a Bay-Delta fix, their support will depend in part on the assurance that California is already using Delta water as efficiently as possible.

Water use efficiency measures serve several purposes. North of the Delta, water use efficiency methods can make water available for other uses and could also provide the opportunity to shift the diversion of water from the system to times when fish will be least affected by the diversions. South of the Delta, in the regions that rely on water exported from the Delta, water use efficiency can make water available for other uses within the export areas, reduce drought shortages for the environment and other beneficial uses, and decrease diversions when necessary to increase Delta outflow.

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Considerations

Californians have intense feelings about water use efficiency. While they believe strongly in its importance, they have serious concerns about its implementation. Through a series of public meetings in spring 1996, Californians told the CALFED Bay-Delta Program that ...

- Increased water use efficiency could reduce the opportunities for additional water use cutbacks during drought, so water use efficiency must be accompanied by good drought planning.
- Long-term conservation differs from short-term measures to respond to shortages during dry periods.
- Local jurisdictions should retain the right to develop their own local water use efficiency programs.
- Some areas of California are already near 100 percent efficiency and have little room for improvement.
- Agricultural land conversion, though a possible strategy for reducing agricultural discharges, is not a water use efficiency measure.

Water Use Efficiency Methods

The Water Use Efficiency Common Program takes two approaches: reduce the need to take water out of the Delta and reclaim water after use. Urban water users will be encouraged to make greater use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), generally-accepted standards for urban conservation, while recycling wastewater. Agricultural users will be encouraged to implement cost-effective actions similar to Efficient Water Management Practices (EWMP's), jointly-developed standards for agricultural conservation.

The Water Use Efficiency Common Program would encourage local agencies to make appropriate water management decisions that reflect local conditions. During Phase II this common program will be refined and its effect on future demand will be estimated.

Potential Implementation Measures

Urban Water Conservation

More urban and industrial water suppliers and users could implement the current BMP's, possibly even expanding the BMP's to include new practices and accelerated implementation rates.

Urban Water Reclamation

Urban water suppliers could recycle water to recharge groundwater basins, supplement irrigation supplies, or store water to meet Delta outflow standards. Recycling programs could involve indirect potable or nonpotable reuse, depending on treatment. Reclamation and reuse should focus on facilities that now discharge treated wastewater into salt sinks or other degraded bodies of water.

Agricultural Water Conservation

More agricultural water suppliers and users could analyze and implement cost-effective measures similar to the EWMP's.

Agricultural Land Conversion

Temporary and permanent land conversion do not improve water use efficiency and will not be included in the CALFED water use efficiency common program. However, the lands that most degrade San Joaquin River water quality could be converted to trusts that focus on drainage management.